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RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1801
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1036
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4811
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4584
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8125
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5686
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0119
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1405
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1488
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0263
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUCLRFA/USDA WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000249

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, G/AIAG
PACOM FOR FPA
USDA FOR FAS/PECAD, FAS/CNMP, FAS/AAD, APHIS;
BANGKOK FOR USAID: JMACARTHUR, APHIS:NCARDENAS, REO:JWALLER

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TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [AMED](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: GOB PLANS TO RELOCATE LIVE BIRD MARKET AS AI
PROTECTIVE MEASURE

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. Rangoon's main live bird market sells more than 40,000 poultry and two million eggs and poultry products each day. Aware that the live bird market poses potential avian influenza threats for those living near the market, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) developed plans to relocate the market by the end of 2008. Using its own funds, YCDC plans to construct two new markets on the outskirts of Rangoon. Officials from the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) held a workshop in early March for officials from LBVD, Ministry of Health, FAO, and WHO, as well as members of the Livestock Federation, to discuss biosecurity and safety standards for live bird markets. GOB agencies continue their efforts to prevent the transmission of avian influenza from animals to humans.
End Summary.

Largest Market in Burma

¶2. (SBU) The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), the GOB organization that handles the development and administration of Burma's largest city, established a central live bird market in Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township in 1991 to encourage the trade of live poultry and poultry products. Initially, YCDC granted five licenses to those dealing in the poultry trade. Currently, more than ninety-six vendors are licensed to sell poultry in the Rangoon market. Each day, more than 40,000 chickens, quail, and ducks and an estimated two million poultry products from Rangoon, Bago, and Irrawaddy Divisions enter the market and are sold to wholesalers and retailers. According to YCDC officials, 90 percent of the poultry sold in the market is sold live; the remaining poultry is processed

within the market.

¶3. (SBU) The Rangoon Live Bird Market, like other live bird markets in Burma, has few biosecurity measures in place, LBVD Director General U Maung Maung Nyunt admitted. Currently, poultry sellers keep chicken, ducks, and other poultry in the same location before selling them, which increases the chances of animal to animal transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). While most poultry are sold live, some sellers process -- which includes killing, beheading, and dressing -- ducks and chickens manually and in the same location before selling them. Although LBVD officials have an ongoing program to train live poultry sellers about proper methods of processing, including implementing biosecurity measures to ensure proper cleanup after processing, it is not clear how effective the program is. We saw little enforcement of these measures in the marketplace. Responsibility for enforcement in the Rangoon Live Bird Market lies with YCDC, LBVD Director Dr. Ohn Kyaw told us.

¶4. (SBU) LBVD officials during the past year have expressed to international organizations and donors their concerns that the live bird market poses a potential threat for the spread of avian influenza from animals to humans, given its location in a residential area and the high volume of people that frequent the market. YCDC, working with officials from QD, recently established policies to closely monitor the health of poultry in the market. Each day, YCDC veterinarians should verify poultry sellers' health certificates and conduct spot checks on the health of poultry found in the market. For any suspected AI cases, YCDC and LBVD veterinarians are to conduct post-mortem exams to verify whether the birds were AI positive. Sales of poultry end at 10 a.m. and YCDC officials are to ensure that the premises are properly cleaned by 2 p.m. For any poultry death cases with abnormal findings, YCDC should coordinate closely with LBVD officials on further actions.

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¶5. (SBU) According to Dr. Ne Aung, LBVD Staff Officer responsible for coordinating with YCDC on bird market issues, the YCDC Director in late 2007 appointed two veterinarians to monitor poultry health in the bird markets. To date, they have not observed any abnormal deaths in poultry in the Rangoon markets. In addition to YCDC monitoring, LBVD staff conduct spot checks of the live bird markets to ensure any outbreaks of AI are caught quickly. LBVD's AI surveillance team and YCDC officials jointly collect sero samples and cloacal swabs from the market on a weekly basis for testing. YCDC officials understand the seriousness of an AI outbreak in Rangoon, Dr. Ne Aung stated. LBVD and YCDC will continue to work together to prevent animal to animal and animal to human transmission of HPAI, he assured us.

Relocation Plans

¶6. (SBU) During our meetings with LBVD officials, U Maung Maung Nyunt has emphasized LBVD's role in convincing YCDC to relocate the Rangoon Live Bird Market. Dr. Htay Aung, Deputy Head of the Veterinary and Slaughter Houses Department within YCDC, told us that YCDC has moved forward with plans to relocate the central market to a more secure location in a non-residential area by the end of 2008. YCDC, using its own funding, will build two new live bird markets on the outskirts of Rangoon, he emphasized. YCDC has not yet set a budget for the construction of the markets and may request funding from international organizations. These markets, to be located in Shwe Pyi Thar Township in northwest Rangoon and Ywar Thar Gyi Township in southeast Rangoon, will be easier to monitor and maintain, Dr. Htay Aung declared. Additionally, by establishing two separate markets, YCDC will be able to reduce the number of live birds that move through one area, he declared. According to YCDC officials, poultry from Irrawaddy and Rangoon Divisions will be sold at the Shwe Pyi Thar market and poultry products from Bago and Rangoon Divisions will go to Ywar Thar Gyi market.

¶7. (SBU) According to Dr. Htay Aung, YCDC will ensure that the new live bird markets will implement proper biosecurity measures to prevent the transmission of avian influenza from animals to animals

and animals to humans. Based on a March 10-12 workshop on Implementing Biosecurity Methods at Live Bird Markets, hosted by LBVD for officials from LBVD, the Ministry of Health, YCDC, World Health Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as members from the Livestock Federation, YCDC officials plan to ensure that the following measures are in place at the new markets:

- The Rangoon Live Bird Markets should implement biosecurity measures as described by LBVD;
- The new markets will close one day per week for cleaning and disinfection;
- Transport vehicles and transport materials should be disinfected upon entrance and exit from the live bird markets each day;
- Vendors should wash their hands frequently with soap and ensure proper personal hygiene;
- All waste water should be treated before disposal;
- Sellers should use plastic coops instead of wooden or bamboo coops or crates. Plastic coops should be thoroughly disinfected each day;
- Slaughter house and processing areas should be separate from the main bird market area;
- Vendors may only sell dressed meat;
- If a suspected AI case occurs, all personnel involved in the investigation of the case should use personal protective equipment (PPE); and

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--YCDC will employ strict disciplinary measures against anyone who does not implement biosecurity measures and follow the rules of the markets.

Comment

18. (SBU) While we welcome LBVD and YCDC recognition of the potential AI threat posed by the live bird markets and plans to relocate them and implement proper biosecurity measures, the GOB needs to take steps to ensure that existing live bird markets meet international standards for biosecurity. Building new markets takes time; the Burmese Government appears to be focused on the future rather than addressing the immediate threat. LBVD recognizes this problem but lacks the resources necessary to address the issue. We will continue to support LBVD, through our partnership with the FAO and the WHO, as it continues to train government staff and poultry dealers on the best way to prevent animal to human transmission of HPAI. We will also closely monitor the results and effectiveness of the GOB's measures.

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